

Accountability Report Transmittal Form

Agency Name: **South Carolina Forestry Commission**

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Agency Director: **Bob Schowalter**

Agency Contact Person: **John A. Dickinson**

Agency Contact's Telephone Number: **843-662-5571**

South Carolina Forestry Commission
Annual Accountability Report
Fiscal Year 2004 – 2005

SECTION I – EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. *Agency Mission and Values:*

The mission of the SCFC is to protect, promote, enhance, and nurture the forestlands of South Carolina, and educate the public about forestry issues, in a manner consistent with achieving the greatest good for its citizens.

The SCFC values:

- Customer Service and Satisfaction
- Professionalism and Pride in Quality Work
- Honesty, Integrity and Treating Employees with Respect and Trust
- Employee Accountability
- Teamwork
- Open Communications

2. *Major achievements from past year.*

- **Succession Planning** -- With approximately 40% of the agency's workforce eligible to retire in the next five years, the State Forester conducted three planning sessions with agency leadership, identifying strategies to be implemented to deal with the pending exit of personnel in key positions. Strategies were adopted and implemented to ensure an adequate transfer of knowledge as these seasoned employees retire.
- **Wildfire Prevention Teams** – With over 95% of all wildfires in South Carolina being human caused, and 42% resulting from outdoor debris burn escapes, three Wildfire Prevention Teams were deployed in three historically high wildfire occurrence areas of the state (one in each SCFC region). The mission of the teams was to inform the public on how to conduct debris burning in a safe and legal manner. Teams distributed print materials, conducted interviews with various media outlets, conducted workshops for homeowners and business leaders, and met with local government entities and local fire service associations. A comparison of fire occurrence data for January through March, 2005 with last year, indicates an approximate 30% reduction in wildfires caused by escaped debris burns.
- **Computer Aided Dispatch System Update** – With funding from a National Fire Plan grant, design, installation, and initial training on the updated computer aided dispatch system software has been completed. It replaces a custom developed application installed in 1996. The system currently is undergoing a rigorous review by users, to be completed prior to the fall, 2005 fire season. The new system incorporates standard 911 dispatch functions and features that will improve efficiency in dispatch and prescribed burning notification operations, reduce training time, improve response times to wildfires, and comply with the State CIO's South Carolina Enterprise Architecture (SCEA) technical standards.
- **State Forest Long-Range Plan** – Implementation of the long-range plan for the state forest system continues. A major component of the plan - the incorporation of information

technologies to provide forest managers with a full function decision support system (including growth and yield models) to enable them to report on the present condition of the resources, as well as the effects of future management applications - was completed in February, 2005. The second phase – incorporation of spatial forest planning - is underway. Management of the state forest system continues to be for sustainable benefits under long-range goals encompassing environmental protection, educational outreach, local and state economic development, and forest based recreation.

- **Forest Resource Development** – The SCFC continued to provide the only up-to-date, accurate data on South Carolina’s forest resource through the forest inventory analysis program. South Carolina’s full forest inventory data is available online and the comprehensive report, “The State of South Carolina’s Forest, 2001”, was published in the fall, 2004. The report is the first of its kind in the nation, reporting on both forest inventory and health issues. The data are utilized in developing or expanding sustainable markets for forest products to benefit forest landowners, forest industry, and the state’s economy. Up-to-date FIA data were instrumental in recruiting Grant Forest Product’s two OSB mills in SC which will generate \$400 million in capital expenditures and 240 jobs. Collaborative partnerships with key organizations have been established or strengthened. South Carolina Forest Products Export Overview is the result of a new partnership with the South Carolina Export Consortium at U.S.C.; through this effort, new emphasis is being placed on identifying new markets for South Carolina’s forest products. Promotion of biomass for energy production also has been a major focus, with two primary energy suppliers in the state expressing strong interests. The report, “Potential for Biomass Energy Development in South Carolina”, commissioned by the Forestry Commission, was released in the fall, 2004. The report was a joint effort of Clemson’s Strom Thurmond Institute and the University of Georgia’s Carl Vinson Institute of Government. The SCFC also continued actively participating in the SC Competitiveness Initiative, working closely with the SC Forestry Association and others in planning the highly successful Governor’s Forestry Summit – Strengthening SC’s Competitive Advantage Through Clustering.

3. *Key strategic goals for present and future years:*

- Protect life, property, and the forest resource from the increasing threat of wildfire and other hazards as the population expands into forested areas. An increased emphasis on the use of prescribed burning, as a means for reducing hazardous fuels, is underway in cooperation with the South Carolina Prescribed Fire Council.
- Continue to assess and realign the workforce at its basic level in response to the changing needs and desires of constituents/customers.
- Maintain an effective, well-trained, well-equipped, and diverse workforce, utilizing succession planning strategies in filling key positions.
- Improve the effectiveness of internal communications.
- Raise the awareness among the public and decision-makers of the economic, environmental, and social benefits of a well managed, healthy forest resource.
- Collect and provide the basic data needed to assess the forest resource and its condition, as well as the potential for the development or expansion of sustainable markets for forest products in support of SC’s Competitiveness Initiative.
- Provide technical advice and direct assistance to private landowners and communities.

4. *Opportunities and barriers that may affect the agency's success in fulfilling its mission and achieving its strategic goals. (This establishes the basis for the agency's budget request.)*

Opportunities:

- Communities, especially those communities located within the wildland-urban interface, need assistance with fire prevention and community forestry plans.
- Increasing public interest in the need for green space and interest in the health and productivity of that space amplify the need to better educate people about the environmental, social, and economic benefits of a well-managed, healthy forest, and the role that prescribed fire plays.
- New and/or not previously served forest landowners need technical forestry advice and assistance.
- All of the above activities underscore the need to continuously collect and provide data to assess the State's forest resource and its condition.
- Funding of the South Carolina Conservation Bank Trust Fund provides an opportunity for the State to increase its forest land holdings. Managed by the SCFC, these forestlands can demonstrate sustainable forestry that includes wildlife, water recreation and jobs.
- With the increasing demands on the forest resource to provide clean water, and in light of growing urbanization into forested areas, the SCFC has an increased opportunity to work cooperatively with other agencies, organizations, and private industries in the promotion of and training in the use of forestry best management practices to protect water quality.
- Increasing value of the forest resource has created the need for highly specialized law enforcement to protect vulnerable landowners from unscrupulous timber buyers, as well as outright theft.
- Homeland security issues and the cross-utilization of multiple agencies in emergency/disaster situations create opportunities for the SCFC to share its expertise, train other agencies in the Incident Command System and to provide incident command team members for emergency responses.
- Increasing need for alternative energy sources provides an opportunity for South Carolina to become a leader in promoting energy from forest biomass.

Barriers:

- Public demands for forestry services, including fire prevention and suppression, have increased as SCFC staffing and budget has declined.
- Rising operating costs, especially rising fuel prices, are increasing the cost of detecting and suppressing wildland fire.
- Past budget reductions have made it necessary to lengthen replacement schedules for firefighting equipment.
- Financial inability to keep pace with technological advances in equipment needed for mission critical functions.
- Loss of experienced personnel through retirements and attrition, with over 40% of the current workforce eligible to retire during the next five years.

- More stringent employment requirements and mandated training for firefighters and dispatchers, coupled with very low starting salaries, make it difficult to hire and retain qualified personnel.
- Many essential FTEs are partly or entirely funded by short-term federal grants.
- The loss of cooperator (forest industry) firefighter capacity, due to the sale of forest industry lands and subsequent reductions in personnel and equipment, places greater demands on the agency's limited firefighting resources.
- County forestry boards' role in management of local personnel hampers the agency's ability to change structure of the agency to meet current needs. This role, specified by law, needs to be changed.
- Expanding population into rural areas contributes to the fragmentation of the forest resource and creates an increased risk of fire to structures built in those areas.
- The state's changing demographic and the fragmentation of forest ownership have created a large number of new forest landowners without a rural background who lack an understanding of the basic management techniques needed to keep their forest lands healthy and productive. This is having an especially adverse impact on the use of prescribed fire in the state.

5. *How the accountability report is used to improve organizational performance:*

The accountability report is utilized by the SCFC to monitor established performance measures, to update or establish benchmarks, and to document continuous improvement efforts. The report also is tied directly to the agency's strategic plan and serves as an annual progress report on the implementation/status of many goals and action items in the plan; specific goals and action items are incorporated into employees' performance planning stages.

SECTION II – BUSINESS OVERVIEW

1. *Number of employees:*

The Forestry Commission is authorized to employ personnel utilizing 411 Full Time Equivalents (FTEs), which is a reduction of 82 positions during the past year. The agency currently employs 375 people.

2. *Operation locations:*

Personnel are assigned positions throughout the state through a series of zone, unit, regional, and headquarter offices. The largest single group of employees, forest fire wardens, reports directly from their residences in responding to wildland fires. Regional administrative and support offices are located in Newberry, Florence, and Walterboro. Central emergency dispatch centers are co-located at the regional office sites. A forest seedling nursery is located in Edgefield County, and a forest seed orchard is located in Jasper County. Major property holdings include Manchester State Forest near Wedgefield, Sand Hills State Forest near Patrick, Harbison State Forest near Columbia, Poe Creek State Forest near Pickens, and Wee Tee State Forest in Williamsburg County.

3. *Expenditures/Appropriations Chart:*

Accountability Report Appropriations/Expenditures Base Budget Expenditures and Appropriations

	03-04 Actual Expenditures		04-05 Actual Expenditures		05-06 Appropriations Act	
Major Budget Categories	Total Funds	General Funds	Total Funds	General Funds	Total Funds	General Funds
Personal Service	\$10,440,694	\$8,401,019	\$10,888,433	\$7,832,740	\$11,003,537	\$7,834,750
Other Operating	\$5,247,429	\$2,946,420	\$6,732,138	\$1,339,432	\$6,549,615	\$2,874,232
Special Items	\$780,727	\$200,000	\$794,872	\$200,000	\$1,050,000	\$200,000
Permanent Improvements	\$128,018	\$66,012	\$190,732		\$0	\$0
Case Services						
Distributions to Subdivisions	\$1,087,855	\$0	\$1,234,008	\$0	\$1,355,000	\$0
Fringe Benefits	\$3,641,160	\$3,044,301	\$3,858,578	\$2,889,047	\$3,965,829	\$2,931,933
Non-recurring			\$0	\$0		
TOTAL	\$21,325,883	\$14,657,752	\$23,698,761	\$12,261,219	\$23,923,981	\$13,840,924

Other Expenditures

Sources of Funds	03-04 Actual Expenditures	04-05 Actual Expenditures
Supplemental Bills	\$0	\$0
Capital Reserve Fund	\$0	\$0
Bonds	\$0	\$0

4. *Major Program Areas Chart:*

Major Program Areas

Program Number and Title	Major Program Area Purpose (Brief)	FY 03-04 Budget Expenditures	FY 04-05 Budget Expenditures	Key Cross Reference for Financial Results*
II Forest Landowners Assistance	<u>Forest Protection</u> To ensure their future health, South Carolina's forests must be protected from harm to include fire, disease, pests and other natural and human-caused factors.	State: 10,697,370 Federal: 2,009,173 Other: 243,093 Total: 12,949,636 % of Total Budget: 61%	State: 9,792,558 Federal: 3,337,237 Other: 1,442,867 Total: 14,572,662 % of Total Budget: 62%	7.3-1 7.3-2
II Forest Landowners Assistance	<u>Forest Management</u> The South Carolina Forestry Commission delivers financial and technical assistance to forest landowners, communities and the public while addressing social and environmental concerns.	State: 1,096,568 Federal: 1,446,138 Other: 861,570 Total: 3,404,276 % of Total Budget: 16%	State: 1,059,058 Federal: 1,373,901 Other: 811,688 Total: 3,244,647 % of Total Budget: 14%	7.3-1 7.3-2
III State Forests	<u>State Forests</u> Management, development and protection of timber, wildlife and endangered species and other resources. An ample productive forestland base and an economic climate conducive to forestry based business are essential if forest landowners of South Carolina are to practice sustainable forest management.	State: 886,319 Federal: 33,997 Other: 838,618 Total: 1,758,934 % of Total Budget: 8%	State: 0 Federal: 4,839 Other: 2,609,064 Total: 2,613,903 % of Total Budget: 11%	7.3-1 7.3-2
		State: Federal: Other: Total: % of Total Budget:	State: Federal: Other: Total: % of Total Budget:	

Below: List any programs not included above and show the remainder of expenditures by source of funds.

Remainder of Expenditures	State: 1,977,495	State: 14,409,602
Resource Development	Federal: 665,900	Federal: 814,222
Best Management Practices	Other: 568,642	Other: 1,043,725
Nurseries and Tree Improvement	Total: 3,212,037	Total: 3,267,549
Forest Information & Outreach	% of Total Budget: 15%	% of Total Budget: 14%
Administration		

*Key Cross-References are a link to the Category 7 – Business Results. These References provide a Chart number that is included in the 7th section of this document.

5. **Key Customers:**

- Owners and users of forestland
- City and county fire and emergency services
- Rural-Urban interface residents and interest groups
- Forest industry
- State forests visitors and user groups
- Urban residents and businesses
- Earth science teachers and students

Major products and services with links to Key Customers:

The major products and services of the Forestry Commission are authorized and required by the South Carolina Code of Laws, Section 48-23-90, *General Duties of Commission*.

Protect the Resource

Key Customers:

- Owners and users of forestland
- Forest industry
- City and county fire and emergency services
- State forests visitors and user groups
- Rural-Urban interface residents and interest groups

The Forestry Commission has a statewide wildfire prevention, detection and control network in place. According to the South Carolina Code of Laws, "It shall take and afford such organized means as may be necessary to prevent, control and extinguish fires, including the enforcement of any and all laws pertaining to the protection of the forests and woodlands in the State."

Commission personnel construct firebreaks on privately owned forestlands to suppress fires and reduce the potential for destructive forest fire. To further minimize the effect of wildfire and smoke hazards, Commission foresters prepare prescribed burning plans for property owners and assist with conducting burns to reduce hazardous fuels, improve wildlife habitat, and prepare sites for reforestation.

Using National Fire funds, the South Carolina Forestry Commission has established numerous project areas around the state to assess the dangers from wildland fire to communities. Working in cooperation with local fire services, local governments, and various business and civic groups, the Forestry Commission is in the process of developing Community Fire Wise Plans for interface communities with a very high or high risk to destruction from wildland fire. These Fire Wise Plans will be used to educate wildland urban interface communities as to how they can reduce the threat of wildland fire to their lives and property. One community, Savannah Lakes in McCormick County, has been designated as a nationally recognized Firewise Community USA.

The Commission periodically surveys the state for forest insect and disease infestations. The Commission's central office has an entomologist and pathologist working from a fully equipped diagnostic lab. This provides agency foresters and landowners access to up-to-date information and diagnosis of specific problems and recommendations for control. The Southern Pine Beetle outbreak, which was responsible for \$255 million in mortality in 2002, continued its decline in 2005. (Graph 7.2-8) At this time we have only two counties in outbreak status (Edgefield and McCormick). (Graph 7.2-9) The SCFC is also instituting a

Southern Pine Beetle Prevention Program that will include providing advice to landowners in minimizing future SPB damage and providing a cost-share program to aid landowners in areas impacted by the beetle. This program utilizes federal grant funding and required no additional State funds.

The Law Enforcement Program provides fire prevention through the enforcement of state fire laws and strives to reduce woods arson and forest product theft and fraud. During FY 05, the agency had 37 commissioned officers, including 7 full-time investigators.

Extended investigations of wildfires was emphasized during the year, resulting in a 60% increase in fire-related prosecutions. (Graph 7.2-6) Sustained, aggressive enforcement of timber transaction laws resulted in a 13% reduction in the number of reported cases of timber theft/fraud. (Graph 7.2-5) The SCFC's Law Enforcement Program serves as a benchmark for our neighboring states, not actively investigating timber theft cases.

The Forestry Commission is the designated agency in South Carolina to provide public oversight and guidance for technical forest management practices. The agency has established approved Best Management Practices (BMPs) and monitors compliance with BMP guidelines routinely. BMP Foresters located in each of the three operating regions of South Carolina offer courtesy BMP exams to landowners, foresters, and timber buyers. The BMP Forester makes site-specific BMP recommendations to follow while conducting forestry activities. During the 04-05 fiscal year, the BMP Foresters completed 404 courtesy exams. Of the 404 sites, 399 (98.8%) were completed in compliance with our recommended guidelines.

Manage the Resource

Key Customers:

- Owners and users of forestland
- Rural-Urban interface residents and interest groups
- State forests visitors and user groups
- Urban residents and businesses
- Earth science teachers and students

Commission foresters, working throughout the state, examine woodlands at the request of the landowner, with an emphasis on assisting new landowners and landowners that previously have not utilized the assistance of a professional forester. According to the South Carolina Code of Laws, "It shall give such advice, assistance and cooperation as may be practical to private owners of land ..."

Based on the utilization of the land, the forester writes a woodland management plan tailored to the specific needs of that property. The plan includes descriptions of each forest stand, recommended practices to meet the objectives of the landowner, and a property map. The plan also includes suggestions on how to accomplish recommended work.

Prescribed burning services and timber marking services are offered for a fee.

There are several financial assistance options available to help landowners complete forestry improvement projects. Commission foresters determine whether or not a landowner qualifies for assistance and then assist with the application process and implementation of the practice.

To assist the state's woodland owners with reforestation, the Commission sells bare root and containerized seedlings. Native pine and hardwood species are available. The SCFC nursery program operates on the receipts from seedling and seed sales.

The Commission manages Sand Hills, Manchester, Harbison, Poe Creek and Wee Tee State Forests on a self-supporting basis for sustainable, multiple-use forestry and public education purposes.

All employees of the Forestry Commission are committed to forest conservation education. Civic and social groups, scouts, science teachers and environmental organizations request programs on forestry and related environmental subjects.

As our urban areas expand, the importance of growing and maintaining healthy trees in city spaces will increase. Foresters work with urban residents, city planners, developers, contractors and local government to improve the quality of our urban environments.

Raise Awareness about the Resource

Key Customers:

- Owners and users of forestland
- Earth science teachers and students
- City and county fire and emergency services
- Regional and county development boards
- Rural-Urban interface residents and interest groups
- State forests visitors and user groups
- Urban residents and businesses

The Forestry Commission is responsible for educating the public on the economic and environmental benefits of a well-managed forest resource. According to the South Carolina Code of Laws “It shall ... promote... a proper appreciation by the public of the advantages of forestry and the benefits to be derived from forest culture and preservation.”

The Commission's Forestry Education Program has been severely reduced during the past four years due to budget cuts. However, Forestry Commission employees, especially those who work on the state forests and in the Education & Information Technology Division, continue to support the agency's popular Wood Magic Forest Fair and Teachers Tour programs. (Graph 7.2-10) E&IT staff produce technical and informational materials (including the SCFC website) to explain forestry programs and educate various publics about the benefits of forestry.

6. *Key Stakeholders (other than customers):*

- Employees
- Commissioners
- County Forestry Boards
- Local governments: county and city councils
- State Legislative members
- State of South Carolina
- State and Federal Agencies such as DHEC, SCEMD, DNR-State Climatology Office, US Forest Service, US Fish and Wildlife Service, National Park Service, Corps of Engineers, Department of Defense, National Weather Service, and US Environmental Protection Agency

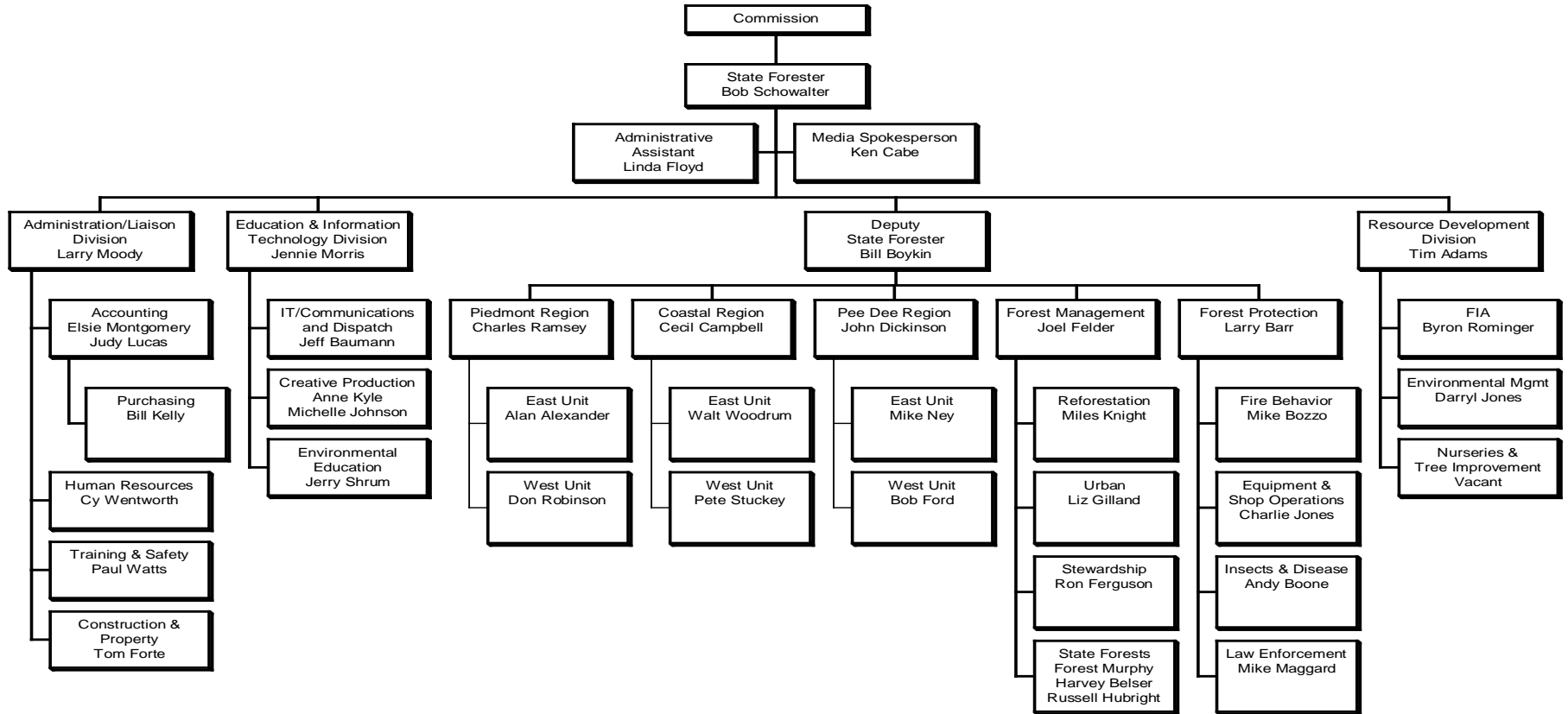
7. *Key suppliers:*

Vehicle equipment manufacturers, heavy equipment manufacturers and dealers, federal excess property inventory system, vehicle repair garages and parts suppliers, communication

equipment dealers and repair businesses, forestry equipment suppliers, office supply vendors, printing businesses and media outlets, and aerial detection contractors.

8. *Organizational Structure Chart:*

South Carolina Forestry Commission Organizational Chart



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SECTION III – ELEMENTS OF MALCOLM BALDRIGE AWARD CRITERIA

CATEGORY I - LEADERSHIP

1. How do senior leaders set, deploy and ensure two-way communication for:

1.1a Short and long term direction?

Senior leaders (agency director, his staff, and division directors) develop short and long term directions with input from the Commissioners' Long Range Planning Committee, stakeholders, customers, field and program leadership, employees, the Executive & Legislative branches of government, and by monitoring and projecting issues and trends that impact forestry and forest resources. Input is obtained through stakeholder and employee meetings, customer surveys, and participation in relevant committees/professional organizations. The State Forester and Commissioners are developing plans to review and update the agency's strategic plan during the coming year.

Deployment and communication are achieved through the strategic and action plans, the performance evaluation process, weekly news bulletins, and through meetings scheduled with employees, customers, and stakeholders. The agency director meets with employee and other groups during the year to provide information on agency direction and receive feedback.

1.1b Performance expectations?

Performance expectations are determined through one or more of the following: review of past organizational performance, review of other organizations' performances, input from employees primarily responsible for carrying out/monitoring the program, and feedback from customers.

Performance expectations are deployed and communicated through the strategic and action plans, the performance review planning process, and follow-up meetings/discussions. Commitment and performance are achieved and supported through periodic and on-going reviews of expectations and progress.

1.1c Organizational values?

Agency leadership adopted organizational values as identified by employees at an agency-wide planning conference. Senior management recognizes the importance of reviewing and discussing organizational values with employees, as well as prospective employees, and strives to deploy and communicate agency values by modeling.

1.1d Empowerment and innovation?

Agency leadership has worked to strengthen and broaden efforts toward empowerment and innovation. Section, program, and operational staff are encouraged to identify opportunities and barriers relevant to accomplishing agency and program goals. Leadership strives to promote intra- and inter-departmental cooperation through regularly scheduled informational sharing meetings.

1.1e Organizational and employee learning?

Organizational and employee learning is primarily set, deployed, and communicated through an established training council which consists of employee representatives from each region and various program staff. Leadership actively supports the efforts of the training council, in identifying, evaluating, prioritizing, and implementing internal training. The SCFC continued its commitment to growing future agency leaders, with two additional candidates enrolled in

the Certified Public Manager program. Transfer of knowledge is a critical issue with impending TERI and other retirements. During the year the State Forester conducted succession planning sessions with agency leadership to develop and implement strategies to reduce the impacts of these employees' pending departure.

1.1f Ethical behavior?

Agency leadership sets, deploys, and communicates ethical expectations through the agency's values, as well as through various policies and procedures and professional organizations. Employees violating ethical principles are dealt with through appropriate individual means.

1.2 How do senior leaders establish and promote a focus on customers and other stakeholders?

Senior leaders have established and promoted a customer focus through the agency's mission statement and strategic and action plans. The agency intentionally seeks customer feedback and input on various services and issues: seedlings sales, services work, technical forest management assistance, changes in timber theft and fraud legislation, notification of wildfires, and recreational uses of state forests through users' advisory councils. This input is obtained through customer surveys, meetings (external and internal), and focus groups.

1.3 How do senior leaders maintain fiscal, legal, and regulatory accountability?

Fiscal, legal & regulatory accountability is maintained through the use of policies, procedures, and internal & external controls. Controls are in place to maintain a separation of duties in the fiscal area. This, along with the use of Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAPP), insures fiscal responsibility & eliminates opportunity for fraud. Monthly reviews of budget status in relation to appropriations and adherence to the State Procurement Codes sustain legal accountability. Use of the State Attorney General's Office & private attorneys to deal with Human Resource complaints, lawsuits or other legal & regulatory issues insure accountability. Audits and reviews by the State Auditor's Office and the U.S. Forest Service are conducted on a regular basis to insure compliance with State and Federal laws, rules and regulations.

1.4 What key performance measures are regularly reviewed by your senior leaders?

- Customer satisfaction levels for forest tree seedlings, forestry assistance, & services (Graphs 7.1-1; 7.1-2; 7.1-3 respectively)
- Forest based economic development impact (Graph 7.2-1)
- Forest Inventory Analysis Productivity (Graph 7.2-2)
- Fire response times & Southern states average fire sizes (Graphs 7.2-3; 7.2-4 respectively)
- Timber theft recovery rates (Graph 7.2-5)
- Law Enforcement Investigations/Prosecutions (Graph 7.2-6)
- Best management practices compliance trends (Graph 7.2-7)
- Southern Pine Beetle losses/salvage (Graphs 7.2-8; 7.2-9 respectively)
- Raise the Awareness About the Resource (Graph 7.2-10)
- Financial (Graphs 7.3-1; 7.3-2; 7.3-3; 7.3-4)
- Employee turnover rates/experience lost, satisfaction (Graphs 7.4-1; 7.4-2)
- Health and Safety (Graph 7.4-3)

1.5 *How do senior leaders use organizational performance review findings and employee feedback to improve their own leadership effectiveness and the effectiveness of management throughout the organization?*

Senior leaders discuss and use employee feedback and organizational reviews to determine if leadership/management is:

- adequately communicating direction and priorities to employees
- identifying and removing barriers that may hinder employees performance
- setting realistic performance expectations
- needing to modify or change priorities

In a continuing effort to improve communications, the agency director conducted several employee meetings in the field and headquarters during the year to share information and obtain feedback. Also, the SCFC received input/feedback from various meetings/reviews during the year: the SCFC Fire Staff, Air Operations Managers, and regional leadership met with the US Forest Service to define/clarify air operations procedures on joint fire suppression efforts; personnel from the US Forest Service and other southern states forestry agencies examined SC's successful Best Management Practices/Water Quality program in a cooperative information sharing effort.

1.6 *How does the organization address the current and potential impact on the public of its products, programs, services, facilities and operations, including associated risks?*

Current and potential impacts are identified by seeking employee, customer, public, partner, legal, financial, and other input/feedback.

1.7 *How does senior leadership set and communicate key organizational priorities for improvement?*

Senior leadership sets key priorities for improvement by reviewing input and feedback from internal and external customers, reviewing available performance data and benchmarks, and noting trends in forestry and government. Priority items may be included in the strategic and action plans, as well as in employees' performance planning documents.

Priorities are communicated by meeting with internal and external customers, the performance review process, and the agency's weekly news bulletins. Key priorities were discussed by the agency director during employee and other meetings conducted this year.

1.8 *How does senior leadership actively support and strengthen the community?*

Leadership and the agency support and strengthen the community by encouraging participation in leadership roles in professional and community organizations and associations. The agency director, as immediate past chair of the Southern Group of State Foresters, serves on its executive committee, as well as on several committees of the National Association of State Foresters. SCFC employees routinely provide advice and assistance, as well as training and grant opportunities to communities, organizations and local governments, especially through the agency's community forestry program, cooperation with rural and volunteer fire departments, and reforestation efforts. Employees' involvement includes participation in and support of local fire, law enforcement, and forestry associations; participation in the United Way, Camp Kemo, Red Cross blood drives, various walk & bike-a-thons, Good Health Appeal, Easter Seals Buck-a-Cup, Palmetto Pride, the Salvation Army, fishing rodeos, state forests and state park events, as well as festivals in towns, cities, and communities.

CATEGORY 2 - STRATEGIC PLANNING

2.1 What is your Strategic Planning process, including KEY participants, and how does it account for:

- a. Customer needs and expectations**
- b. Financial, regulatory, societal, and other risks**
- c. Human resource capabilities and needs**
- d. Operational capabilities and needs**
- e. Supplier/contractor/partner capabilities and needs**

The Forestry Commission's strategic planning process involves collecting input and data from agency Commissioners, employees, customers, cooperators, and the public. Information/data is analyzed and its content verified, like issues consolidated, strategies identified, the plan developed and disseminated, with reviews and updates occurring as the plan is carried out.

As the plan has been reviewed and revised, efforts have been undertaken to more closely align the plan with the EPMS process and the Malcolm Baldrige National Award Criteria.

The State Forester and Commissioners are developing plans to update the strategic plan during the coming year.

2.1a Customer needs and expectations?

The strategic plan indicates that customers' needs and expectations will be sought through surveys, focus groups, individual interviews, and monitoring of complaints. Input from customers is a primary basis for developing action items in the plan. The agency conducts on-going customer surveys on seedling sales, forest management plan development and forestry services for private landowners, and has established local recreational advisory committees that meet regularly on three state forests.

2.1b Financial, regulatory, societal and other risks?

Specific financial, societal, or other risks are addressed in individual action items in the strategic plan; this includes reviewing the agency's financial and staffing levels and needs.

2.1c Human resource capabilities and needs?

The strategic plan reflects the agency's intent to plan effectively for the use of human resources, with a strong emphasis on training and safety for firefighters and foresters. In response to ongoing budget reductions and to initiate systematic planning for vacancies created by retirement, the Forestry Commission reviewed its structure, programs, and staffing levels, and reorganized and realigned the workforce. Efforts continue on developing a stronger cross-functional workforce in the performance of forest protection and management services, and in implementing succession planning strategies developed during the year.

2.1d Operational capabilities and needs?

Action items within the strategic plan specify that various capabilities/processes will be examined through internal audits or reviews. During the preceding fiscal year the Forestry Commission's Best Management Practices/Water Quality program was examined by an external review team. Efforts are continuing to examine additional work processes and to identify key performance measures.

2.1e Supplier/contractor partner capabilities and needs?

Major contractor and partner needs and capabilities are covered in specific action items, with a focus on strengthening working relationships by improving mutual understandings of needs and capabilities.

2.2 *What are your key strategic objectives? (Address in Strategic Planning Chart)*

The agency's five key objectives are as follows:

1. **Protect the Resource** – To ensure their future health, South Carolina's forests must be protected from harm due to natural and human-caused factors.
2. **Raise Awareness about the Resource** – We must raise awareness among decision-makers and the public in general concerning the environmental, social, and economic benefits of sound forest management.
3. **Manage the Resource** – Forest landowners, communities, and the public expect the South Carolina Forestry Commission to deliver financial and technical assistance while addressing social and environmental concerns.
4. **Enhance the Resource** – An ample, productive forestland base and an economic climate conducive to forestry-based business are essential if forest landowners of South Carolina are to practice sustainable forest management.
5. **Prepare to Meet Future Demands** – To meet future demands and provide quality customer service, the South Carolina Forestry Commission must have well-trained, qualified staff that enjoy a safe and rewarding work environment.

2.3 *What are your key action plans/initiatives? (Address in Strategic Planning Chart)*

To Protect the Resource, the SCFC will:

1. Evaluate fire protection strategies and priorities as urban development into forested areas creates additional hazards.
2. Increase law enforcement services in wildfire and forest product theft and fraud arenas.
3. Re-evaluate programs to ensure prompt response to insect and disease outbreaks and concerns.
4. Evaluate programs to ensure protection of environmental functions, including air and water quality.
5. Increase contractor recognition of, and compliance with, BMPs.

To Raise the Awareness about the Resource, the SCFC will:

1. Develop and promote forestry education programs for all audiences.
2. Enhance its image as an initial source for forest management assistance in South Carolina.
3. Utilize current and available media to reach targeted audiences with relevant forestry information.
4. Significantly increase interaction, cooperation, and communication with other state agencies, local governments, forestry organizations, universities, professional societies, environmental and conservation groups.

To Manage the Resource, the SCFC will:

1. Provide improved land management services to landowners of South Carolina by being more responsive to the needs of our customers.
2. Administer federal and state cost-share reforestation programs and provide technical forest management assistance designed to meet landowner's goals.
3. Provide technical assistance and financial grants in urban and community forestry to local governments, non-profit organizations, other agencies, and individuals.

4. Use its landholdings to demonstrate innovative forest management techniques as well as for in-house training and applied research.
5. Provide landowners with optimum quality forest tree seedlings to meet needs not filled by the private sector.

To Enhance the Resource, the SCFC will:

1. Serve as a catalyst for promotion and sustainable development of the forest resource and forestry-related industry in the state.
2. Improve contacts and communication with state and local levels of government concerning forestry-related issues.
3. Provide policy makers, industry, and environmental groups accurate and timely information on the state's forest inventory and health of the forest.

To Prepare to Meet Future Demands, the SCFC will:

1. Strive to maintain a capable, satisfied and diverse work team.
2. Develop internal training programs to prepare employees to utilize emerging technologies as means to improve customer services.
3. Review staffing levels and organizational structure to ensure the agency is in a position to supply needed services.
4. Develop internal training programs for agency personnel to efficiently, safely, and professionally provide better land management services.
5. Establish goals and implement plans to reduce the number of job-related injuries.
6. Establish goals and implement vehicle and equipment operation safety training to reduce the number of accidents.
7. Develop plans to enhance professional development of SCFC personnel.
8. Establish and maintain an Incident Management Team to assist with all-risk incidents; not only wildfire incidents but also non-fire incidents such as hurricane response and other disaster relief support functions/operations.

2.4 *How do you develop and track action plans that address your key strategic objectives?*

Action items were identified for each goal in the strategic plan and were included in the plan. Agency leaders and program managers further identified steps needed to achieve the action items and the personnel involved. These action items have been included in specific employees' EPMS planning stages, with managers and supervisors responsible for tracking progress.

2.5 *How do you communicate and deploy your strategic objectives, action plans and performance measures?*

The agency's strategic plan is published on the SCFC website (see address below). All managers review and update strategic plan action items each year when performance appraisals are due. Employees are reminded of objectives, review performance measures, and discuss new action plans to improve performance measures with supervisors at that time.

2.6 *If the agency's strategic plan is available to the public through the agency's Internet homepage, please provide an address for that plan on the website.*

The web address for the agency's strategic plan is www.state.sc.us/forest/stratplan.htm.

2.7 Strategic Planning Chart:

Strategic Planning

Program Number and Title	Supported Agency Strategic Planning Goal/Objective	Related FY 03-04 Key Agency Action Plan/Initiative(s)	Key Cross References for Performance Measures*
II Forest Landowners Assistance Protection	Section III, Category 2, Question 2.2, #1. Protect the Resource	Section III, Category 2, Question 2.3, Protect the Resource #1 – 3 Section III, Category 2, Question 2.3, Raise the Awareness about the Resource, #4 Section III, Category 2, Questions 2.3, Prepare to Meet Future Demands, #1-3, 5-7	7.2-3, 7.2-4, 7.2-5, 7.2-6 7.2-8, 7.2-9 7.3-2, 7.3-4
II Forest Landowners Assistance Forest Mgt.	Section III, Category 2, Question 2.2, #2 - 5	Section III, Category 2, Question 2.3, Enhance the Resource, #2 Section III, Category 2, Question 2.3, Manage the Resource #1 – 4 Section III, Category 2, Question 2.3, Raise Awareness about the Resource, #2, #4 Section III, Category 2, Question 2.3, Prepare to Meet Future Demands #1 – 4	7.1-2, 7.1-3 7.1-2
III State Forests	Section III, Category 2, Question 2.2, #2 – 5	Section III, Category 2, Questions 2.3, Manage the Resource #4	
Other Programs	Section III, Category 2, Question 2.2, #1 – 5	Section III, Category 2, Question 2.3, Enhance the Resource, #1 – 3 Section III, Category 2, Question 2.3, Protect the Resource, #4, 5 Section III, Category 2, Question 2.3, Manage the Resource, #5 Section III, Category 2, Question 2.3, Raise Awareness about the Resource, #1 – 4 Section III, Category 2, Questions 2.3, Prepare to Meet Future Demands, #1 – 7	7.2-1, 7.2-2 7.2-7 7.1-1 7.2-10 7.3-1, 7.3-2, 7.3-3, 7.3-4 7.4-1, 7.4-2, 7.4-3

*Key Cross-References are a link to the Category 7 – Business Results. These References provide a Chart number that is included in the 7th section of this document.

CATEGORY 3 – CUSTOMER FOCUS

3.1 How do you determine who your customers are and what are their key requirements?

Our key customers were generally identified in the South Carolina Code of Laws, Section 48-23-90 *General Duties of Commission*. As our services and products have evolved over the years our customer base has expanded to include other non-traditional forestry customers. For example, urban populations have expanded into the more rural and forested areas of our state and we are responding to this population's need for assistance on their personal property, as well as providing information on their surrounding natural environment.

Our agency uses a variety of methods to determine requirements, expectations, preferences and satisfaction of customers and stakeholders:

- Customer Surveys
- Focus Groups
- Public Forums and Workshops
- Collaboration with Partners and User Groups
- Outreach Publications for Targeted Audiences
- Interviews
- County Forestry Board Meetings
- Monitoring of Legislative Activities

The Forestry Commission has conducted surveys of customers to determine their expectations and preferences. Survey forms soliciting feedback are sent to landowners that receive forest management assistance or services. Customers are asked about the length of time it took to complete the service, the results of the service, follow-up on the service, and courtesy and professionalism of the employees.

Each year, agency leadership also participates in meetings of county forestry boards to discuss current forestry issues and agency programs.

Federal grants dictate who we provide assistance to regarding Community Forestry, Best Management Practices, and the Wildland/Urban Interface.

Periodic mailings to new forest landowners, surveying their interests and needs help acquire new customers.

3.2 How do you keep your listening and learning methods current with changing customer/business needs?

The Forestry Commission seeks input and information through customer surveys and employee feedback, as well as through participation in a number of partnerships and councils. These include: SC State Government Improvement Network, Urban and Community Forestry Council, SC Statewide Outreach Council, Wildland Fire Protection Partnership, the Prescribed Fire Council, South Carolina Foresters Council, Southern Group of State Foresters, National Association of State Foresters, Emergency Management Division, South Carolina Forestry Association, many local landowner associations, professional organizations, and the South Carolina Firemen's Association.

3.3 How do you use information from customers/stakeholders to keep services or programs relevant and provide for continuous improvement?

Information about customer satisfaction and suggestions for improving services is reviewed by the senior leadership of the Forestry Commission and is disseminated to the appropriate

program manager to improve the service or product. Regionally, this information is passed on to the area/unit and then to the county where the work is performed for improvement.

3.4 *How do you measure customer/stakeholder satisfaction?*

Customer satisfaction surveys for forest management plans, forest services, and forest tree seedlings are provided to customers for them to fill out and return in a self-addressed postage paid envelope. This has been done for the past six years for management plans (Graph 7.1-3) and services (Graph 7.1-2). Survey information for the past seven years is available for forest seedling customers (Graph 7.1-1).

3.5 *How do you build positive relationships with customers and stakeholders?*

Complaints are recorded and promptly investigated to determine all problems and to attempt to alleviate them quickly.

The Forestry Commission meets with state forest user groups on a timely basis to discuss and plan for future opportunities on Forestry Commission owned land that is used for various recreational purposes.

The Forestry Commission makes timely responses to state legislators when our elected officials seek input.

The Forestry Commission's Wildland Urban Interface Program reaches out to community planners and developers, residents and business owners in the state's ever-expanding wildland urban interfaces. This is a hazard mitigation and education program to help these customers reduce risks to their communities as well as their lives and property.

The Forestry Commission reaches educators, young people, and other interested citizens with exhibits and interpretive signage on Harbison State Forest. The agency cooperates with other natural resources agencies and organizations as well as forest industry to provide two popular forestry education programs. The Wood Magic Forest Fair is an award-winning, weeklong program on the benefits of forests and forestry offered to 4th grade classes statewide. The SC Teacher's Tour is offered for graduate credit during the summer. (Graph 7.2-10)

CATEGORY 4 – INFORMATION AND ANALYSIS

4.1 How do you decide which operations, processes and systems to measure for tracking financial and operational performance?

Historically, measures have been used to monitor program accomplishments. Output measures were commonly used as a gauge of our activity levels. The agency's performance measurement system is constantly evolving and improving. More recently however, new measures have been developed based on their importance to the overall success of our agency. The SCFC has continued to strengthen its focus on the improvement of efficiency, effectiveness, quality and outcome measures.

We continue to design measures linked directly to our mission and the objectives outlined in our strategic plan. Senior management determines which measures should be developed for internal use, and which measures will be reported on an annual basis.

4.2 What are your key measures?

Customer Satisfaction

- Customer Satisfaction Level for Seedling Production (Graph 7.1-1)
- Customer Satisfaction with Forestry Services (Graph 7.1-2)
- Customer Satisfaction with Forest Management Plans (Graph 7.1-3)

Enhance the Resource

- Forest-Based Economic Development Impact (Graph 7.2-1)
- Forest Inventory and Analysis Productivity (Graph 7.2-2)

Protect the Resource

- Fire Response Time in Minutes (Graph 7.2-3)
- Average Fire Size (Graph 7.2-4)
- Timber Theft and Fraud Cases (Graph 7.2-5)
- Five Year Average of Fires, Extended Investigations, and Prosecutions (Graph 7.2-6)
- BMP Compliance Trends (Graph 7.2-7)
- SPB Losses (Graph 7.2-8)
- SPB Salvage (Graph 7.2-9)

Raise Awareness about the Resources

- Teacher Participation and Demand (Graph 7.2-10)

Employee Satisfaction, Involvement, and Development

- Employee Turnover Rate (Graph 7.4-1)
- Six Year Turnover Among Fire Wardens (Graph 7.4-2)
- Physical Fitness Program Participation (Graph 7.4-3)

Regulatory/Legal Compliance and Citizenship

- Appropriations – State General Funds (Graph 7.3-1)
- Agency Operating Funds from State General Funds (Graph 7.3-2)
- Voucher Transactions as a Result of Visa Card Usage (Graph 7.3-3)
- 1-800 Charges per 10,000 Calls Received (Graph 7.3-5)

4.3 *How do you ensure data integrity, timeliness, accuracy, security and availability for decision making?*

Measures and data have been used during program reviews at the area/unit and state levels. Senior management has instructed regional foresters and division directors to begin sharing performance data with personnel at all levels as a means of improving processes and generating feedback.

We are updating our Computer Assisted Dispatch System to improve data collection and analysis.

We undergo annual audits of financial records and processes. An internal auditor reviews data collection processes on an ongoing basis.

4.4 *How do you use data/information analysis to provide effective support for decision making?*

Each delivery process and each support process has its own set of measures. These measures are used to determine process efficiency and effectiveness. The agency has overall measures of effectiveness, such as, customer satisfaction, turnover rate, and financial reports. Decision-makers at all levels will have access to performance measures and are expected to factor that information into their thinking and decisions.

4.5 *How do you select and use comparative data and information?*

Comparative data from similar state forestry organizations is available on a limited basis. However, we strive to get the best comparative data available. Each state records data differently. Contacts made with southeastern states reveal that most state forestry organizations are just beginning to track meaningful performance measures. South Carolina is the only southeastern state which tracks dispatch response times through a statewide real time computer aided dispatch system. The Southern Group of State Foresters has adopted the moderate level work capacity test as the standard to measure wildland firefighter physical fitness.

4.6 *How do you manage organizational knowledge to accomplish the collection and transfer and maintenance of accumulated employee knowledge, and identification and sharing of best practices?*

Succession plans have been developed in key program areas to capture organizational knowledge. Fire Reviews are conducted annually to transfer knowledge learned on individual fires to others within the agency. A cross-functional team, with rotating leadership, prepared the agency's accountability report.

CATEGORY 5 – HUMAN RESOURCES FOCUS

5.1 How do you and your managers/supervisors encourage and motivate employees (formally and/or informally) to develop and utilize their full potential?

The Forestry Commission encourages, arranges, and enables employees to obtain the State's Certified Public Manager Award (CPM) and to participate in the South Carolina Executive Institute to help them be more effective supervisors and better prepare them for promotional opportunities.

Although past budget cuts required the suspension and/or curtailment of our performance pay and bonus programs, we continue to strive to reward outstanding employee performance. We consider this financial recognition incentive to be a high priority.

We recognized those employees who undertook additional duties and responsibilities as a result of budget changes. We believe that as we continue to adjust to doing more with less it is very important to reward those employees who respond to the challenge and perform well.

We encourage supervisors to nominate their employees for the above type of rewards and we believe that these programs have a positive effect on employees throughout the organization.

Tuition assistance is available in our agency and is viewed as a win-win situation for employees to expand their educational opportunities as well as help provide increased levels of expertise for the agency.

We involve employees in our strategic planning processes. During plan development and revision, data and information were collected and shared at area/unit level meetings throughout the agency. Representatives from all areas of the organization participated in refining information for the plan.

Recruiting for new foresters is generally conducted at various forestry schools in the southeast with onsite interviews and screenings, looking for bright energetic candidates with knowledge and skills to develop into future leaders of the organization. We value promoting from within to fill the majority of our supervisory and upper management positions and have been very successful doing so over the years through these recruiting efforts.

Structured career paths providing for advancement opportunities, additional skills and knowledge gained through training, and salary increases are available for many of our job classifications.

5.2 How do you identify and address key developmental training needs, including job skills training, performance excellence training, diversity training, management/leadership development, new employee orientation and safety training?

Identification of training needs is done by asking program managers to stay current on all required training and new techniques and technologies affecting their programs and requesting appropriate training. A training council meets quarterly to review training needs and has developed training guides to set minimum training requirements by job position. The training director constantly looks at training opportunities and insures that all personnel meet required training. Affirmative action training is provided each year to all supervisors authorized to hire. In direct response to the pending separation of a number of personnel in key positions, the State Forester conducted a series of succession planning sessions with agency leadership, to develop strategies for the orderly replacement of personnel in these positions.

5.3 *How does your employee performance management system, including feedback to and from employees, support high performance?*

Our Employee Performance Management System uses a universal review date of January 1, which allows supervisors to emphasize strategic plan action items for employees during the calendar year. Position descriptions have been revised to reflect strategic plan objectives for selected positions and for positions that were changed due to FY 02-03 restructuring.

5.4 *What formal and/or informal assessment methods and measures do you use to determine employee well being, satisfaction, and motivation?*

Employees are surveyed periodically for input on issues and areas needing improvement, such as planning conferences and development/updating of strategic plan action items. The SCFC was the first state agency to conduct a Malcolm Baldrige Self-Assessment in 1997, as well as the first state agency to conduct a follow-up Baldrige Self-Assessment which was completed in August 2002. Employee input is obtained through established training and safety committees.

5.5 *How do you maintain a safe, secure, and healthy work environment? (Include your workplace preparedness for emergencies and disasters.)*

Maintaining a safe and healthy work environment is accomplished by stressing safety in all aspects of the agency. Safety training such as defensive driving, forklift operations, use of fire shelters and first aid training is required of certain positions. The safety coordinator looks at all accident reports to recommend ways to avoid similar accidents in the future. Safety inspections of facilities and operations are ongoing and other agency personnel with special expertise are involved where needed. Employees are encouraged to participate in health screenings and health fairs. Some facilities have an evacuation plan. Work is underway to insure that all facilities have such a plan. Facilities that do allow public access have audible alarms on the doors away from the main reception area where needed. Dispatch Centers that do not require public access are kept locked especially after business hours for security of the dispatchers. Exterior door locks have been replaced with keyless entry systems to improve security with personnel turnover. Dispatch Centers have their windows shuttered during major storm events and are equipped with emergency backup power and communications systems. Transportation in four wheel drive vehicles is made available to dispatchers during severe weather events.

The Southern Group of State Foresters has adopted the moderate level work capacity test (walking 2 miles with a 25-lb. pack in 30 minutes or less) as the standard to measure wildland firefighter physical fitness. Several states have begun implementation of physical fitness programs to reach this goal. The SCFC is involved with this effort. Participation in the Physical Fitness Program is required for all fireline employees and for those that volunteer to assist with fireline duties. (Graph 7.4-3)

5.6 *What activities are employees involved with that make a positive contribution to the community?*

We conduct annual fund drives for United Way, Good Health Appeal, Easter Seals Buck-a-Cup, and the Salvation Army. Our agency employees actively serve on interagency, community and municipal advisory boards and participate in numerous community programs such as Palmetto Pride, volunteer fire departments, career days at schools, Camp Kemo, fishing rodeos, state & county fairs, state forests and state parks events, as well as festivals in

towns, cities, and communities. Agency employees also participate in fundraising activities for charitable organizations such as MS and American Cancer Society.

CATEGORY 6 – PROCESS MANAGEMENT

6.1 *What are your key processes that produce, create or add value for your customers and your organization, and how do they contribute to success?*

The agency offers products and services to forest landowners and the general public in five key areas: forest protection, forest management, state forests, seedling production, and forestry education.

Forest Protection

The SCFC provides landowners with wildland firefighting assistance through a network of firefighters and equipment stationed throughout the state. Dispatching the closest firefighting unit is a key process in protecting the forest resource. The agency has three dispatch centers located in Newberry, Florence, and Walterboro. These centers operate using a Computer Aided Dispatch System (CADS). A Statewide Dispatch Operations Coordinator provides operational and technical oversight of the dispatch centers. At this level, detailed and independent analyses of key success criteria are performed annually to facilitate consistency. Field personnel are provided with the tools to monitor their own activities. Reports with information such as response times, individual fire reports, monthly fire reports and non-emergency dispatches are distributed to supervisors monthly.

In fiscal year 2004-2005, the Forestry Commission, utilizing a National Fire Plan grant, contracted with a firm experienced in designing 9-1-1 software systems to provide new Computer Aided Dispatch System (CADS) software and hardware for wildfire and emergency dispatch. The completed system was installed in June, and dispatchers received initial training. The new CADS will improve the efficiency of our dispatch efforts and our response times to wildland fire incidents. This technology gives us state-of-the-art dispatching capabilities unique throughout the nation. Such improved dispatch operations will help reduce the losses of life, property and natural resources to wildland fires.

The SCFC, with funding from the National Fire Plan, has designated 137 extreme to high communities –at risk of wildfire in the state and are working with them in conducting wildfire risk assessments. These on-going assessments provide homeowners, community planners, Fire Departments, and SCFC wildland firefighters with mitigation actions to reduce the wildfire hazard. Communities that take actions to reduce the risk of wildfires become eligible to receive national recognition as a “Firewise Community USA”. This past fiscal year, Savannah Lakes Village in McCormick County became the first recognized “Firewise Community USA” in South Carolina. Homeowner and community leader education programs in the format of workshops are on-going throughout South Carolina with eight communities benefiting from such workshops with attendance of over 250. Additional presentations were made regarding Firewise communities at various conferences including a joint meeting of the SC Chapter of the American Planning Association and the SC Urban and Community Forestry Council; the annual meeting of the SC Prescribed Fire Council; the Clemson extension agent conference; the Sumter County Landowners Association; Chapin Men’s Club, and exhibits at the SC Nursery and Landscaping Association/SC Horticulture Industry Show; and the SC Firemen’s Convention.

The SCFC administers National Fire Plan Volunteer Fire Assistance grant funds to assist Fire Departments, in purchasing wildland fire fighting equipment, communication equipment, and personal protective equipment and to provide training for fighting fires in the Wildland Urban Interface. This cooperative effort between the SCFC and Fire Departments is critical in achieving success in reducing losses to life, property, and our natural resources.

Wildfire Prevention Teams

Three Wildfire Prevention Teams, one in each region, were deployed in three historically high areas of wildfire occurrence. In the Coastal Region a team was headquartered out of the Moncks Corner office and concentrated its efforts around the Francis Marion National Forest. The team deployed in the Piedmont Region actually worked the most southern part of the region in Lexington County whereas the Pee Dee Region team concentrated their efforts in lower Williamsburg and upper Georgetown counties. The mission was to inform the public about how to conduct debris burning in a safe and lawful manner. Escapes from debris burning, mainly yard debris burning, is the number one cause of wildfires in the state. Therefore, addressing the debris burning problem, a human-related cause, is a logical area for the prevention teams to concentrate their efforts.

Publications and products were developed and created with the message 'Think Before You Burn' to further emphasize the need to be in compliance with the outdoor burning laws- to notify and to be prepared by taking the necessary precautions before burning. This message was printed on posters, brochures, and table tents and distributed to local businesses and schools throughout the targeted areas. 'The Living with Fire' newspaper insert was also distributed to the local newspapers serving these areas to help inform homeowners of the practices they can implement to make their home Firewise thereby minimizing loss from wildfire.

Workshops were conducted for community leaders and homeowners in each of the targeted areas to provide them with information concerning wildfires, to show how to develop Firewise Communities and to foster working cooperative relationships with local fire departments and community leaders.

On average compared to last year (2004) the number of debris burn fires this year (2005) decreased over the same three month period (January – March) by 30%.

The SCFC also administers the process of accepting notification of outdoor burning. Forestry, agriculture, and wildlife burning notifications are received by the regional dispatch centers. All other notifications for outdoor burning, including construction debris, right-of-way debris, trade waste and yard debris, are received by an automated voice mail system. This system is an efficient way to process large numbers of calls (400,000+ per year) in a timely fashion and to deliver a consistent fire safety message to the burner. (Graph 7.3-4 & 7.3-5)

New technology for detection of forest pests is constantly being evaluated. An example of technological advance is the use of the Global Positioning System in conducting aerial surveys. By using a preprogrammed GPS, the SCFC was able to eliminate the need for one of three personnel required for the survey. The use of GPS technology also cut the time required for each survey by providing the aircraft pilot a constant and continuous flight track throughout the survey.

Forest Management

The SCFC provides forest landowners with assistance in managing their forestland. This involves a wide range of services including the development of management plans, the monitoring of environmental guidelines, and the re-inventory of South Carolina's forests. Customer surveys are mailed to recipients of forest services or management plans. (Graph 7.1-2 & 7.1-3) Compliance with agency-approved environmental guidelines is monitored biannually on federal, state, industrial and private forest ownership. Results are published and widely distributed in hard copy and over the Internet. A key activity of the SCFC is the re-inventory of the state's forestland. Four two-person crews are measuring plots to exacting

national standards. The US Forest Service is required to check a minimum of 5% of our plot work to ensure quality control. (Graph 7.2-2)

State Forests

The SCFC's State Forests demonstrate sustainable multiple-use management to forest landowners and the general public. In FY 00-01, the State Forests began developing a long-range plan to address the primary uses of the State Forests. The plan was completed in June 2002 and approved by the Commissioners, with implementation well underway.

In FY 04-05, a contract was signed with a vendor to provide technology to implement a forest inventory system and establish a central location for compilation and storage of data. This system has enabled the agency to greatly improve forest-wide planning, program budgeting and other essential functions. The next step will be to develop a harvest scheduling model that will assist forest managers with budget planning and ensure forest sustainability.

Local recreation advisory groups continue to provide assistance in implementing our recreation plans on state forests.

Seedling Production

The Nursery and Tree Improvement Section of the SCFC supplies forest landowners in South Carolina with high-quality forest tree seedlings. Approximately 8.5 million seedlings were produced during FY 04-05. A 10% customer survey is implemented annually as a feedback mechanism to direct future product design. Ninety-two percent of those responding are satisfied with the overall quality of the products and services provided by the Nursery and Tree Improvement Section of the Commission (Graph 7.1-1). In response to our survey, we learned that:

- Customers are satisfied with our current product mix.
- Customers are pleased with shipping of products.
- Need for more variety and smaller units is being met.

Also, an annual financial analysis is completed to adjust seedling production and price. This analysis is critical as the SCFC nursery program is supported by the sale of seedlings and seed.

In spring 2003, the Nursery and Tree Improvement program applied for a US Forest Service grant in order to do a thorough review of three aspects of our program: the possible consolidation of Creech and Taylor nurseries, our seedling distribution system, and alternative management strategies for Niederhof Seed Orchard. Implementation of these recommendations was completed in FY 04-05.

Forestry Education

One of SCFC's primary missions has always been to promote an awareness and appreciation by the public of the ecological, social and economic functions and benefits of the state's forests. The agency's Environmental Education Program has been decimated by budget cuts and loss of dedicated personnel due to retirements and internal restructuring. However, Forestry Commission employees on the state forests and in the Education & Information Technology Division support the agency's popular Wood Magic and Teachers' Tour programs and produce technical and general informational materials on forestry and forest-related subjects. With fewer staff available for direct classroom instruction, educators in grades K-12 have become focal points for professional development training so they can take information back to their classrooms and impart this knowledge to their students. SCFC has led the field in correlating educational training and programs to the SC Department of Education's

Curriculum Standards in order to stay current with changing educational reforms. All programs and training are content oriented and standards-based to ensure that they meet the requirements of the State Department of Education (SDE). New technologies such as computer based and web based educational programs are used whenever possible. Partnerships have been formed with federal and state agencies as well as industries to provide our remaining educational programs at an economical cost.

All educational programs offered by SCFC are evaluated and adjusted to meet perceived needs. The demand for these quality programs exceeds SCFC's ability to accommodate them. (Graph 7.2-10)

6.2 *How do you incorporate organizational knowledge, new technology, changing customer and mission-related requirements, cost controls, and other efficiency and effectiveness factors into process design and delivery?*

A new Computer Aided Dispatch System (CADS) has been installed containing features, functions and enhancements outlined in a request for proposals that incorporated suggestions and recommendations from dispatchers, fire managers, and information technology professionals. An "off-the-shelf" solution was selected over a custom developed system to control costs and to utilize technology and functions developed for 911 systems. Enhancements utilizing the power of GIS software are planned to improve the efficiency in taking Smoke Management Burn Notifications, locating wildfires, and identifying and notifying the closest available resources to an incident.

In recent years the SC Forestry Commission has gone through numerous changes. Some of these changes have caused a lessening of our ability to provide services due to a decrease in staffing levels. During these years of change the agency's leadership has continued to seek ways of becoming more efficient and effective. We have an ongoing process that surveys SCFC customers regarding our performance. (Graphs 7.1-1, 7.1-2, 7.1-3) We have improved our web site so that our citizens can attain information and maintain contact with us. We have continued to develop and conduct an extensive training program for our employees. Our aim is to seamlessly weave new technologies and improved employee performance into a tightly integrated system to deliver the best possible service to the people of South Carolina.

6.3 *How does your day-to-day operation of key production/delivery processes ensure meeting key performance requirements?*

Forest Protection

The new CADS makes automatic the process of determining compliance with Smoke Management Guidelines when dispatchers take burn notifications. This should reduce the process time and increase the accuracy in complying with state regulations. Several key processes for dispatching resources to wildfires are now automated and/or improved to help reduce overall response times. The new system allows for the incorporation of technology for providing automatic vehicle location to aid in response time and safety of agency employees.

Recent downsizing of the agency due to budget cuts has required the integration of historically non-fire SCFC employees into both fire fighting duties and fire fighting support roles.

The automated yard debris burning notification system was modified so that all non-smoke management type vegetative debris burning notifications could be directed to that system as of July 1, 2001. It was estimated that this change would redirect approximately 30,000 calls per year from our dispatch centers to the automated system. This reduction in call volume allows dispatchers to more efficiently handle smoke management notifications, radio

communications, and wildfire calls. The automated system was also modified to handle 24 calls simultaneously, which increased its call handling capabilities by 50%. Another benefit of this change was an overall reduction in the average costs per ten thousand calls handled. (Graph 7.3-4)

Forest Management

Customer surveys are sent out following services work or delivery of management plans. (Graph 7.1-3) Responses are returned directly to the regional forester and analyzed with particular attention given to any negative responses. Contacts are made with landowners where possible to review responses and correct any problems with service delivery. In general, statewide programs, such as the Environmental Management and Forest Inventory and Analysis programs, are directly supervised by a Columbia staff forester with specific training in that program area.

The Commission is a major cooperator in the 2006 National Aerial Photography Program, which will acquire 1:40,000 color infrared aerial photography of South Carolina during January and February of 2006. The Commission will work with the Department of Natural Resources and other agencies to convert this photography into Digital Orthophoto Quarter Quads (DOQQs). Field foresters are utilizing desktop mapping and geographical information systems to develop recommendations and maps in the delivery of forest management services to forest landowners.

State Forests

Annual work plans are reviewed by agency management. Forest product sales are reviewed and approved by the agency's nine-member Commission. Federal and state regulatory agencies work closely with the state forests to ensure protection of rare plants and animals.

Seedling Production

Key success criteria are included in Nursery and Tree Improvement facility manager's EPMS rating criteria. Success criteria include measures of seed & seedling quality as well as protection of the productive capability of the nursery soil. There is technical oversight by staff at the Auburn University Cooperative, of which the SCFC is a member. Internally, agency staff reviews seedling production periodically.

During FY 04-05, second generation loblolly cones were collected and sold from our seed orchard and seed processed for our own use. Other species were also collected and processed to meet our needs.

Forestry Education

Individual evaluation by participants is a key component of all SCFC educational programs, including professional development programs such as Project Learning Tree and the SC Teachers Tour. Program changes are constantly being considered and made based on these participant evaluations.

Pre- and post-test are given to participants in the Wood Magic Forest Fair to evaluate program effectiveness. The program has consistently shown significant increases between these test scores. Fourth grade teachers are sent pre-visit materials as well as post-visit materials and lessons to enhance the content of the Wood Magic program.

In general, there is an overwhelming demand for SCFC forestry education programs. (Graph 7.2-10)

6.4 *What are your key support processes, and how do you improve and update these processes to achieve better performance?*

Information Technology

Most aspects of our business involve technology and information management. We have established a presence on the Internet as a means to disseminate information. Internet sales of State Forest recreational permits and Nursery and Tree Improvement seedlings are being explored.

The Information Systems group is responsible directly and indirectly for the maintenance and support of the agency's wide area network, 10 Windows NT Servers, 8 Windows 2003 Servers, and over 200 computer users and their software applications. A major effort began in FY 03-04 to replace all computers and servers from Microsoft Windows NT 4.0 operating system and upgrade computers and software to meet the State CIO's South Carolina Enterprise Architecture standards. This effort continued in FY 04-05 with a large majority of the agency's 5-7 year old, Windows NT 4.0 computers being replaced. A goal was established to reduce the agency's replacement cycle for computers from 5-7 years to 3-4 years.

Geographic Information Systems (GIS) technology and spatial data is being used to improve and implement new processes in decision making. Using a National Fire Plan grant, a Fire Risk Assessment model is being created to help identify high fire risk areas of the state on a daily basis. A Smoke Model developed by the US Forest Service is being tested to improve prediction capabilities to mitigate the impact smoke from prescribed burns and wildfires may have on major highways. The goal is to reduce or eliminate highway fatalities due to smoke. Historical fire occurrence data is being spatially analyzed to aid managers in making resource allocation decisions and reducing response times to wildfires.

Training Programs

Fire training is a key internal activity specific to the South Carolina Forestry Commission due to our emergency response mission. We also require employees to attend training in human resource management areas such as Equal Employment Opportunity training, recruiting and hiring practices, and supervisory skills. We also held sessions on Sexual Harassment Prevention Training with all SCFC supervisors (92) attending. Some of the US Forest Service personnel attended as well. The Training Council serves as an advisory board to review training policy and procedures and develop training schedules based on needs submitted from employees, supervisors, and program managers.

Mandatory training guidelines have been developed and implemented for major job categories within the Commission. Specialized training is also provided to meet regulations imposed by other agencies such as OSHA, SFM, DHEC etc. Continuing education is provided to keep employees current with emerging technology.

During FY 04-05, 179 training sessions were held to better equip our personnel in performing their jobs. Training is also provided for external customers. Eight training sessions were held for Fire Management, with 134 non-SCFC personnel in attendance. Three Certified Prescribed Fire Manager courses were held with 82 in attendance. The majority were non-SCFC personnel.

As a leader in the use of the Incident Command System in South Carolina, the SCFC has been asked to provide Incident Command System training to all of the State Law Enforcement Division's sworn officers. In FY 04-05, 11 sessions of I-100 Introduction To The Incident

Command System and 12 sessions of I-200 Basic Incident Command System were provided to State Law Enforcement Division personnel.

The SC Emergency Management Division conducted a statewide WMD full-scale exercise in June 2005, and an objective was that one of the SCFC Incident Management Teams (IMT) handle the management of a Logistical Staging Area (LSA) for relief supplies for the state. The LSA location for the exercise was the federal warehouse at the SC State Agency for Surplus Property. Eighteen members of the IMT and SCEMD liaison personnel were involved in the two-day exercise. The IMT performed well and this exercise helped SCEMD and the SCFC to finalize the standard operating procedure for the management of an LSA.

Accounting Department

Financial audits by the State Auditor's Office have had no reportable findings over the past several years. We continue to monitor and improve our processes and procedures with internal audits and existing staff. The number of voucher transactions continues to decline as a result of using the Purchasing Card (Visa) program. This has eliminated the need for 1 FTE (Graph 7.3-3).

6.5 *How do you manage and support your key supplier/contractor/partner interactions and processes to improve performance?*

US Forest Service Cooperative Funding

We are the primary partner for the US Forest Service in South Carolina in implementing forestry-related programs. Federal funds are allocated to key SCFC state partners based primarily on funding levels and project prioritization by SCFC-led coordinating committees. SCFC routinely participates in USFS sponsored meetings regarding grant allocation procedures and tracking.

Southeastern States Forest Fire Compact

South Carolina belongs to this compact of thirteen southern states, which allows member states to provide and receive mutual aid in fighting wildland fires.

Air Operations

The Forestry Commission has two sources for early detection of wildfire: fires called in to dispatch centers by the public and aircraft detection. Aircraft detection services are provided by both contract pilots and aircraft and by aircraft on loan from the federal government flown by South Carolina Forestry Commission pilots. Contract pilots are SCFC trained to detect and report location, size, and woodlands involved in a wildfire to dispatch centers that dispatch fire suppression resources to the fire. In addition to detection, South Carolina Forestry Commission pilots and aircraft are used in the fire suppression effort to assist ground crews and equipment with information needed to suppress the fire in a safe and efficient manner. Close coordination among agency pilots and contractors is required to operate efficiently.

The SCFC is partnering with the SC Army National Guard to provide Blackhawk Helicopters to fly SCFC 750 gallon Bambi Buckets on wildfires that threaten life and property. In addition, the SCFC has a similar agreement with the Greenville County Sheriff's Department for their UH-1 Huey Helicopter to fly a SCFC 324 gallon Bambi Bucket on wildfires in the upstate. Meetings with these partners to update/review memorandums of understanding and operating procedures are conducted annually.

All Risk Incident Response Teams

The SCFC has developed Incident Management Teams (IMTs) Type 3, which will not only respond to project fires but also non-fire incidents such as hurricane response. IMT personnel have been chosen based on experience and training and will receive additional training related to their position on the IMT. The SCFC is responsible for running the Logistical Staging Area or warehouse for SC Emergency Management Division in case of hurricane or other major incident from which emergency supplies such as food, water and ice are shipped to impacted areas. The IMT is structured to handle this operation in an organized manner. A Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) has been developed for this operation and has been presented to the EMD for insertion in their hurricane relief plan.

Prescribed Fire Council

The SCFC called together all those interested in prescribed burning to form a Prescribed Fire Council. A steering committee representing about 18 various agencies, organizations and interests have met to discuss the future of prescribed burning and to develop a strategic action plan. The plan will address the direction the PF Council will head to inform the public of the benefits of prescribed burning and to promote the proper use of prescribed fire as a forestry management tool.

Fire Suppression Equipment

Our Equipment Program Manager works closely with fire suppression equipment dealers and factory representatives to stay abreast of new designs and technology. The equipment program produces specifications to receive bids on equipment and provides design and fabrication capability to the field organization. Equipment specifications are updated as state-of-the-art technology changes, such as the development of hydrostatic transmissions. Equipment maintenance, warranty issues, inventory, cost effectiveness and replacement scheduling are also responsibilities of the program which in turn provides information as needed to equipment manufacturers and other related partners; pre-bid conferences are conducted to review specifications and to respond to vendors' questions. Equipment costs are tracked by software. The Commission utilizes training sessions provided by vendors to stay abreast of changes, participates in vendor demonstrations, and shares information with sister states.

Forest Management

Assistance provided to family forest landowners by the Forestry Commission is very dependent on cooperation from service providers such as tree planters, buyers of forest products, private consulting foresters, and many other professionals. The SC Forestry Commission maintains lists of contractors that provide services to landowners in all parts of South Carolina and provides training for contractors to insure that landowners receive quality service. This training is often provided in cooperation with other natural resource agencies and conservation organizations. The SCFC also periodically meets with other forestry professionals to provide updates on various forestry programs and issues.

University Cooperative Membership

The SCFC stays current with state-of-the-art forestry research through membership in university-based research cooperatives, such as the Auburn Nursery Cooperative. The collaborative effort and related cost of conducting research is spread over all cooperative members, eliminating redundant efforts and expenses.

The state forester serves on the Clemson University Department of Forestry and Natural Resources Advisory Board; a regional forester and a forest director also serve on advisory boards at Horry-Georgetown Tech and Central Carolina Tech.

CATEGORY 7 – BUSINESS RESULTS**7.1 *What are your performance levels and trends for the key measures of customer satisfaction?***

In 1998 we began measuring customer satisfaction with our forest tree seedling products. The combined satisfaction levels have consistently remained in the 90%+ range as illustrated in Graph 7.1-1. In FY 05, 92% of surveyed customers responded that they were either very satisfied or satisfied with the overall quality of the products and services provided by the Nursery and Tree Improvement Section of the Commission. We routinely review comments on returned surveys looking for ways to improve our product and delivery systems.

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In 1999 we began measuring customer satisfaction levels with our forestry services and our technical forest management assistance. Graphs 7.1-2 and 7.1-3 illustrate our overall satisfaction levels. Our immediate goal is to improve our forestry services to the 95% satisfaction level. We feel this is a very reasonable and attainable goal.

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7.2 *What are your performance levels and trends for the key measures of mission accomplishment and organizational effectiveness?*

Enhance the Resource

Forest industry development and investment increased significantly in spring 2004-2005. Grant Forest Products announced their intent to build two OSB (oriented strand board) plants in Allendale and Clarendon Counties in South Carolina. This will bring \$400 million in capital expenditures to the state and income for 240 families. Also notable, International Paper Company announced a \$125 million capital improvement project at their Eastover paper mill. Kronotex USA Inc. began operation of their laminated flooring plant in Barnwell County. Agency personnel worked on a total of 16 forest-product related economic development projects during the year.

A major emphasis during this past fiscal year was the promotion of woody biomass as a renewable energy source in South Carolina. The Strom Thurmond Institute at Clemson University was funded to publish a report on the “Potential for Biomass Energy Development in South Carolina.” The report was published in Fall, 2004 and the availability of up-to-date biomass information has been critical in working w/ potential bioenergy producers.

In addition to the Strom Thurmond Institute biomass project, the SCFC utilized USDA Forest Service grants to fund several economic development projects. “SC Forest Products – An Export Overview” was published in Fall, 2004 by the SC Export Consortium to highlight SC’s top forest products and markets. The use of bioretention cells for treating stormwater runoff was demonstrated by Clemson researchers at an Orangeburg County Industrial Park. Also, funding was provided to Clemson University to quantify the amount of biomass on Clemson Forest that could be utilized for bioenergy.

During the 2005 fiscal year, the SCFC Resource Development Division represented the agency and forestry community through 10 statewide and regional economic development organizations. The SCFC has taken a lead role in the SC Competitiveness Initiative representing the forestry clusters. Finally, 170 individual business assists were to address single-issue requests.

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South Carolina became the first state in the US to complete the new annualized forest inventory and publish the results. “The State of South Carolina’s Forests” report was published in Fall, 2004. The report addresses forest resource status and extent as well as forest health issues.

In fiscal year 2005, the Forestry Commission’s Forest Inventory and Analysis (FIA) program completed 934 FIA plots. The FIA program is currently 72% completed with the 9th survey of the State as illustrated in Graph 7.2-2.

The FIA program is currently fully staffed with four two-person crews located across the state. If funding and staffing remain constant, expected completion of the 9th survey in December, 2006. Data for the 9th survey will be available online by Summer, 2007.

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Protect the Resource

Response time to wildland fires is dependent upon many factors, some of which are beyond our control, such as traffic congestion and budget related staffing levels. We refer to fire response time as the time from when we receive the first report of a wildfire until the time our fire warden arrives on the scene.

Internally we measure the different segments of response time and strive to improve each segment with a goal of reducing overall response time to 30 minutes or less at full staffing levels. Graph 7.2-3 illustrates that our average response time for FY 04-05 was 35.19 minutes, which is near the seven-year average of 35.09 minutes. Since we are currently not operating at full staffing levels we have had to realign our workforce in order to respond in a timely manner. As seen by this year's figures we have been successful in maintaining a reasonable response time but still have not yet met our goal of 30 minutes primarily due to past budget cuts and reductions in staffing.

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The Forestry Commission measures and compares the average fire size on state and private lands with twelve additional southern states. The 10-year average fire size is 16.5 acres per fire for the thirteen southern states. South Carolina has the third lowest 10-year average fire size with 6.0 acres per fire as shown in Graph 7.2-4.

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The Law Enforcement Program provides fire prevention through the enforcement of state fire laws, and strives to reduce woods arson and forest product theft and fraud. During FY 05, the agency had 37 sworn officers, including 7 full-time investigators. Extended investigations of wildfires were emphasized, resulting in a 60% increase in fire-related prosecutions (Graph 7.2-6). Sustained, aggressive enforcement of timber transaction laws resulted in a 13% reduction in the number of reported cases of timber theft/fraud (Graph 7.2-5). The SCFC's Law Enforcement Program serves as a benchmark for our neighboring states that are not actively investigating timber theft cases. In cooperation with the statewide Palmetto Pride initiative, SCFC officers also issued 81 citations for littering.

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One of the most effective methods of preventing wildland fires is to investigate every fire and prosecute law violators. (Graph 7.2-6) Our forest wardens are the first line of defense, conducting preliminary cause and origin determination on fires they suppress. If there is a violation or need for further investigation, a Forestry Commission officer or investigator is called in to conduct a more extensive investigation and make charges if warranted.

Despite a light fire season, fire investigations and prosecutions increased significantly. Strong emphasis on law enforcement yielded 508 fire law prosecutions; this represents more than 22% of the 2,283 wildfires suppressed by the Forestry Commission during the year.

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Graph 7.2-7 shows compliance with harvesting Best Management Practices from previous surveys. Compliance for harvesting BMPs was 84.5% in 1991, 84.7% in 1993, 89.5% in 1994, 91.5% in 1997, and 94% in 2001. Compliance with BMPs related to site preparation was 84.5% in 1996, 98% in 1999, and 96.4% in 2003. In the fall of 2004, two hundred sites were located and inspected for compliance with BMPs relating to timber harvesting throughout the state. Compliance with harvesting BMPs rose to 98% in this survey.

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The SCFC is charged by law with the detection, evaluation and suppression of insect and disease pests on forestlands in South Carolina. During Southern Pine Beetle (SPB) outbreaks we survey all forest properties within the designated outbreak zone. Individual infestations

are located during these aerial surveys and ownership of affected areas is determined. Landowners with detected beetle spots are then notified of their problem and offered advice and assistance in controlling their insect infestation. The Insect & Disease staff and other agency personnel accomplish surveys and landowner notifications. Southern Pine Beetle activity declined significantly during the year. (Graph 7.2-8 & 7.2-9)

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Raise Awareness about the Resource

The Forestry Commission strives to reach South Carolina's school children through "train the trainer" programs for teachers such as Project Learning Tree (PLT) and the annual S.C. Teachers Tour. The Wood Magic Forest Fair, designed for fourth graders, also equips teachers to explore such topics as sustainable forestry and recycling. Each of these programs meets the state's educational requirements for teacher certification and/or classroom instruction.

In recent years, interest in and applications for both the Teachers Tour and the Forest Fair have exceeded the number of programs we were able to offer. The primary limiting factor is the growing scarcity of qualified instructors due to SCFC and cooperator staff reductions. Taking this into account, in FY 04-05 the SCFC reduced the number of days that the Wood Magic Forest Fair was offered and sent out applications only to those schools that had not previously attended.

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7.3 *What are your performance levels for the key measures of financial performance?*

The Forestry Commission's recurring State Appropriated funds have been cut from \$19,742,565 in FY 01-02 to \$12,191,858 in FY 04-05 (Graph 7.3-1). Additional losses of carry forward and other funds bring the SCFC's total reduction to over \$8 million. With the majority of state appropriated funds being used for salaries and benefits, the agency has had a corresponding reduction in its workforce (Section II, 1 and 3).

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Agency operating funds from state general funds also have been reduced significantly (Graph 7.3-2). Operating budgets for protection services now are funded primarily with short-term federal grants and revenue earned from forestry services.

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With the increasing use of the State Procurement Card (VISA) for the purchase of supplies, the Agency has been able to reduce its number of voucher transactions by approximately 50% since the card's inception. Because of this reduction, the number of positions in Accounts Payable has also been reduced accordingly. (Graph 7.3-3)

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In FY 02, the Forestry Commission began routing all burning notifications, except those for forestry, wildlife and agricultural purposes, to an automated notification system. This greatly improved the efficiency of the Forestry Commission in handling these calls, dispatchers handling other calls, and substantial savings in 1-800 charges.

Graph 7.3-4 shows the percent change from the previous fiscal year in the amount of rainfall, number of fires, number of burning notifications, number of 1-800 calls, and charges for those 1-800 calls. By routing all burning notifications except those for forestry, wildlife and agricultural to the automated notification system, the Forestry Commission decreased the charges in 1-800 calls by 20.33% in FY 02 when compared to FY 01. This occurred even

when rainfall decreased by 16% and fires increased by 20.7%, 1-800 calls made to the Forestry Commission increased by 12.29%, and only a slight 4.38% decrease in the total number of notifications taken.

An additional 39.96% savings in 1-800 charges was seen in FY 03. Only part of these savings can be attributed to the 22.59% reduction in 1-800 calls due to a decrease in fires and notifications as a result of an increase in rainfall for the year. The rest is due to the improved efficiencies in the handling of these calls with the automated notification system.

FY 04 saw an 11.12% decrease in rainfall and a 93.69% increase in fires compared to FY 03. Burning notifications increased by 20.25% in FY 04 while the automated system handled a 15.9% increase in notifications. These factors increased the number of 1-800 calls to the Forestry Commission by 22.07%, but charges for these calls only increased by 15.87%. The automated notifications system easily handled the increased call volume and allowed dispatchers to more efficiently handle wildfires and smoke management burn notifications.

Wildfires decreased by 33% in FY05 compared to FY04 due in part to a 23% increase in rainfall. The number of burn notifications taken was about the same as the previous year. These factors contributed to an 8% decrease in 1-800 calls, but due to improved efficiencies in handling these calls and a state contract reduction in costs, the agency saw a 35% savings in 1-800 charges in FY05 compared to FY04.

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When the SCFC migrated from local fire towers to regional dispatch centers, toll free numbers were established to encourage the public to comply with state laws requiring them to notify the Forestry Commission when burning outdoors. The SCFC handles over 400,000 burning notification calls per year. In FY 02 the SCFC began routing all burning notifications, except those for forestry, wildfire, and agriculture purposes, to an automated notification system. This greatly improved the agency's efficiency in handling these calls, as well as in dispatchers handling other calls. Graph 7.3-5 shows that the trend of improved efficiency and effectiveness in handling large volumes of incoming 1-800 calls with the cost per 10,000 calls received decreasing each fiscal year.

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7.4 What are your performance levels and trends for the key measures of Human Resource Results?

The SCFC turnover rate in FY 01-02 increased drastically as a direct result of budget related Voluntary Separation Programs and Retirement Incentive Programs implemented in the agency to minimize layoffs. Turnover rates returned to somewhat more traditional agency levels during the past two years. (Graph 7.4-1)

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Forestry Wardens comprise 43% of the total number of agency employees, which constitutes the largest job category of employees. During the period 7/1/98 – 6/30/05, of the 95 Wardens who left employment, 53 retired, which is 55%. Graph 7.4-2 shows the experience level of the 95 who left employment. Not only does Graph 7.4-2 demonstrate the longevity and successful careers of many of our Wardens it also points out the need for extensive recruitment efforts and effective new employee training programs.

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The Southern Group of State Foresters has adopted the moderate level work capacity test (walking 2 miles with a 25-lb. pack in 30 minutes or less) as the standard to measure wildland

firefighter physical fitness. Several states have begun implementation of physical fitness programs to reach this goal. The SCFC is involved with this effort.

Participation in the Physical Fitness Program is required for all fireline employees and for those that volunteer to assist with fireline duties. Graph 7.4-3 shows that the total number of employees and number of fireline employees have been significantly reduced due to mandated budget cuts since 2001. It also shows that while the number of employees taking the physical fitness test has decreased, the percentage of employees taking the test and passing has increased from 85% in 2001 to 91% in 2004. This improvement can be attributed to efforts of some employees to improve their physical fitness levels and an emphasis on hiring more physically fit employees.

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During the period from 7/96 to 10/00 a total of 65 employees received performance pay increases or pay bonuses in recognition of outstanding contributions to the agency. Unfortunately, these programs had to be suspended due to the ongoing budget crises. We consider this financial incentive to be a high priority; in May of last year we honored our commitment of pay increases or bonuses to 75 employees who had waited nearly a year to be recognized for their vastly expanded roles and responsibilities resulting from our major reorganization in July 2003.

The average state service for all state employees is currently 12.33 years, compared to the average state service for Forestry Commission employees of 14 years. We continue to believe this comparison is indicative of our employees enjoying their work and their working environment.

7.5 *What are your performance levels and trends for the key measures of regulatory/legal compliance and community support? Note: For a government agency, this question would apply to compliance with laws and regulations other than the agency's central legal mandate. Results of the agency's legal mandate or mission should be address in question 7.2.*

We are subject to financial audits, Cooperative Forest Management Review by US Forest Service, Federal Aviation Administration inspections and regulations, State Fleet Management inspections, OSHA regulations, and DHEC Smoke Management Guidelines and Outdoor Burning Regulations. We have audits in the areas of accounting, purchasing, insurance, classification, and compensation. They have all been performed without findings of audit exceptions in the past several years. Federal funds require compliance with Title VI of the 1964 Civil Rights Act. The USDA Forest Service monitors compliance on a regular basis.